



**NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®**

National Advocacy Center  
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November 7, 2017

Dear Representative,

The National Wildlife Federation, with over 6 million members and supporters and its affiliate organizations from 51 states and territories across the country, represents a broad diversity of political views, mirroring the nation. Regardless of party affiliation, these members want their families to be safe, their water to be clean, and ecosystems to be healthy in order to support our nation's wildlife. It is important, then, that any large-scale energy project, including hydroelectric, uphold those values as well. While NWF believes that the United States should pursue a renewable energy future, the country should do so while seeking to minimize harm to local ecosystems and wildlife and gather input from those near hydroelectric facility sites. This is especially important as hydropower is not without environmental impacts, including greenhouse gases released from reservoirs associated with dams. In order to weigh all impacts as well as the benefits, proper review processes should be followed and corners cannot be cut. Because of these long-held standards, **NWF opposes H.R. 3043, the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017.**

The National Wildlife Federation has long supported robust environmental review processes. Federal and state governments should approach projects with a genuine interest in determining negative effects on the environment, wildlife, and local communities. H.R. 3043 includes provisions that place arbitrary deadlines on project reviews, even when it is clear that a proper study will take longer. Unfortunately, this bill would remove our experts in natural resources from the review process and usurp states' rights to enforce their own standards for hydropower projects. Additionally, considerations of energy supply would be required alongside protections for endangered species, fisheries, and cultural sites, contradicting existing laws. If passed into law, H.R. 3043 would likely create confusion and litigation. We have seen in the past how large-scale hydroelectric projects have not always considered potential negative effects. We should learn from our past mistakes, not repeat them.

While there was a hearing on this bill, only the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission testified, leaving out important voices. Among those voices left out were tribal leaders, states, and local officials who will be required to abide by these new rules. Not only does this legislation limit input from those near proposed hydroelectric projects, but it also does so for those who live near existing dams seeking a permit renewal. This legislation would constrict the review processes for dams approaching their 50-year review mark. It is important to make sure that these projects, which were built before our current rules were put in place, remain up to the standards we set for human safety and minimal impact to the environment, economically important fisheries, and recreation sites.

In short, while this bill and its proponents claim to help our nation move toward a more sustainable and climate-friendly future, we need a system in place that can consider our energy

needs in addition to the economic, environmental and cultural needs of our communities. Since climate change is the most significant challenge of our time, we urge the committee and supporters of this legislation to have a transparent and robust discussion, not only of our energy needs but also of potential impacts from hydropower such as wildlife and greenhouse gases. For all of these reasons, **National Wildlife Federation recommends you oppose H.R. 3043.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Lyon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "L".

Jim Lyon  
Vice President for Conservation Policy  
National Wildlife Federation